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To the Cricklade and Wootton Bassett Rural District Council.

GENTLEMEN,

I have the honour to present my Annual Report on the Health and Sanitary Condition of the Cricklade and Wootton Bassett Rural District for the year 1910.

Population—

The estimated population is 10,926. At the census taken in 1901 the population was 11,357.

Birth Rate—

260 births were registered in the District during 1910. Of these, 137 were males and 123 females. This number shows a decrease of 20 as compared with the number in 1909, and a decrease of 39 on the average for the last ten years. The rate for the whole District in 1910 was 23.79 per 1000 population, as compared to 26.65, the average of the preceding ten years, and to 25.51 of last year.

Eighteen illegitimate children were born during the year.

Death Rate—

There were 134 deaths during the year. Of these, 72 were males and 62 females. In the Workhouse at Purton 11 deaths occurred, and in the Devizes Lunatic Asylum there were 4 deaths of persons belonging to the District. The rate for the whole District was 12.26 per 1000 of the estimated population, as compared to 14.03 in 1909, and to 15.39, the average of the preceding 10 years.

59 deaths were of persons over 65 years of age. 3 persons died of Diphtheria, 12 of Cancer, 5 of Pneumonia, 11 of Bronchitis, 8 of Influenza, accidents were the cause of 2, and there was 1 suicide.

Infantile Mortality—

There were 17 deaths of infants under one year of age, as compared with 260 births. This mortality is a decrease on that of the previous year, which was 22, and, what is satisfactory to note, is well under the average for the past 10 years, which is 26.70. The rate per 1000 births registered is 63. Three only of these deaths were from prematurity.

Infectious Diseases—

I regret to say there has been a considerable increase in the incidence of notifiable disease in the District during the past year. An outbreak of Diphtheria occurred in Purton Stoke, and was unfortunately attended by three fatalities. Small outbreaks of Scarlet Fever have occurred at Purton and Wootton Bassett, but owing to the prompt measures taken, spread of the disease did not assume an alarming character.

There has been a considerable epidemic of measles affecting the districts around the hamlets of Greenhill and Hook, and later Clyffe Pypard and Bushton—99 cases in all being notified.

It was found necessary to close Purton Stoke School on account of Diphtheria, and Hook and Clyffe Pypard Schools on account of measles. Broad Town School, also, was closed for a week owing to the prevalence of Influenza among the children. The total period of closure of all Schools during the year was 43 days.

Investigation as to the possible cause of the outbreaks of these diseases, has shown that there is considerable improvement in the sanitary condition of the District as a whole, although, of course, there still remain parts which time will allow us to alter, to the benefit of everybody. With regard to the presence of Diphtheria at Purton Stoke, this can in no way be ascribed to the absence of suitable drinking water, for the place has been well served by the public supply during the year, but is in all probability due to the presence of so called "carrier" cases of the disease, and until some method for the wholesale bacteriological examination of the throats of all children attending the School can be undertaken, the disease will not be stamped out.

The following table gives the number of cases notified during the year, and in the preceding nine years:—

		Scarlet Fever	Diphtheria	Enteric Fever	Erysipelas	Puerperal Fever	Measles
1901	...	41	1	1	3	1	?
1902	...	55	2	2	6	1	259
1903	...	40	35	3	5	0	21
1904	...	37	56	1	3	2	large number
1905	...	36	17	1	6	0	110
1906	...	7	11	0	3	0	8
1907	...	44	27	0	7	1	105
1908	...	6	7	0	8	0	627
1909	...	2	16	0	2	0	104
1910	...	28	8	0	4	1	99

Tuberculosis—

No notifications of this disease have been received this year. The number of deaths at all ages from Tuberculosis was 11, of which number 10 were from Phthisis.

Isolation Hospital—

The Hospital continues adequately to serve as a check to the spread of the ravages of Diphtheria and Scarlet Fever in the District. Of 36 cases of notifiable disease which can be admitted, 30 cases have been treated there, of these, 7 were cases of Diphtheria, and 23 of Scarlet Fever. The remaining cases were successfully isolated at home.

The new Washhouse and Mortuary attached to the Hospital, which it was decided to erect last year, have been completed, and are now in use, proving satisfactory in all respects.

Drainage—

Cricklade and Wootton Bassett alone have a sewerage system, and the sewage is disposed of by irrigation. Wootton Bassett is regularly scavenged. In other parts of the District the use of cesspits and vault closets is gradually becoming rarer, and as opportunity offers these are done away with and the pail closet substituted.

Public Water Supply—

Cricklade, Purton, Purton Stoke, and Wootton Bassett are now served by a public supply, and this has proved adequate and satisfactory during the year. Section 6 of The Public Health (Water) Act, 1878, is now enforced in all cases in the District, and under section 3 of this Act, 22 actions have been taken during the past year.

The new storage tank at Wootton Bassett, with a capacity of 50,000 gallons, has been completed and has proved of very great benefit to the town. Steps are being taken to ensure a further supply of water for Purton and Purton Stoke.

Dwellings—

Only four new houses have been erected during the year. These are of good class, but further building of houses and cottages for all classes is very desirable in all parts of the District. It has been necessary to take action in only one case of overcrowding. Four houses have been condemned as unfit for human habitation, and shut up.

Dairies and Cowsheds—

218 of these are now registered. Systematic inspection of the farms is carried out by the Sanitary Inspector and Medical Officer of Health. Notices are served to all farmers with regard to cleansing and lime washing of the premises, and the orders enforced. There is a general improvement noticeable in the way the cowsheds and buildings are kept in the majority of instances. The water supply to the farms and dairy buildings varies, and in a great many instances is still taken from surface wells and ponds.

Bakehouses and Slaughterhouses—

22 Bakehouses are registered in the District. These are thoroughly inspected by the Sanitary Inspector, who reports they are in a satisfactory condition.

Only two Slaughterhouses are registered. In November, a diseased carcase dressed as for sale and intended for human food, was seized and destroyed. The prosecution subsequently undertaken by the Council proved successful.

Statistical Information—

Tables I to V., and the Table on the Administration of the Factory and Workshops Act, 1901, are enclosed, together with the Report of the Sanitary Inspector.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

John N. Watson,

Medical Officer of Health.

